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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Turkey on EU Train, Target is Full Membership - Sabah
Turkey's EU Dream Becomes a Reality - Hurriyet
A New Europe, A New Turkey - Milliyet
Vienna Falls - Milliyet
Erdogan: Turkey Takes Giant Step on Historic EU Path - Sabah
Gul: Turkey Steps into New Era - Milliyet
'Condi' Resolves Crisis, Backs Turkey at EU - Vatan
Condi's Call Saved Turkey's EU Bid - Aksam
US: Turkey Belongs to Europe - Milliyet
Straw: EU Will Grow Stronger with Turkey - Sabah
Talabani-Jafari Tension Over Kirkuk - Hurriyet
Palestinian Police, Infuriated by Hamas, Raid Parliament - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

Happy Ending: Turkey, EU at Negotiating Table - Radikal
Both EU and Turkey Win - Radikal
Erdogan: Hopes Strengthened for Global Peace - Zaman
Rice Calls Erdogan to Express Support - Cumhuriyet
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Straw: Turkey a Muslim, Secular, European Country - Cumhuriyet
US Uneasy with Israeli Activities in Northern Iraq - Yeni Safak
Kurdish-Shiite Power Struggle in Baghdad - Yeni Safak
Amnesty Warns Russia on Human Rights Violations - Cumhuriyet
31 Taliban Fighters Killed in Afghanistan - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

Turkey, EU Open Landmark Accession Talks: Turkey opened historic membership negotiations with the European Union early Tuesday, 42 years after it was first offered membership in the European bloc. After tough negotiations that began Sunday evening and lasted late into Monday afternoon, Austria withdrew its demand that Ankara be offered a 'privileged partnership' as an alternate to full EU membership. EU members reached a settlement over the negotiation framework document, and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul arrived in Luxembourg after midnight to be greeted by British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and other top-level EU officials. In an opening statement, Straw urged Turkey to press ahead with reforms, strengthen the independence of the judiciary, beef up basic freedoms, assure civilian control of the military, and improve the situation in the mainly Kurdish southeast of the country. 'This is a truly historic day for Europe and for the whole of the international community. We are showing that it's not about religion or religious differences. It's about being bound by the same set of values,' Straw said. Gul said that 'we have come to a historic point today, and that is the point of beginning talks for full membership.' Gul told the press before departing Ankara for Luxembourg that the 'win-win' situation with the EU that emerged yesterday would add to Europe's diversity. 'Turkey is determined to carry on with reforms. 10 years from now, Turkey will be a very different from the Turkey of today. Some of the concerns that are seen in European public opinion will not exist in 10 years' time,' Gul said. Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said in a statement that Ankara had reached an agreement that is 'in line with Turkey's expectations.' 'Turkey has taken a giant step forward on its historic march. At the beginning, every negotiation process is open-ended. But a target has been established, and that is the achievement of full membership,' the Turkish PM added. Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel said that if Turkey does not fulfill the conditions, the alternative will be the

establishment of 'the strongest possible bond' with Ankara. Schuessel told the 'citizens of Europe' that opening accession talks with Turkey will not lead to an automatic mechanism that cannot be stopped. German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said that the eastern Mediterranean will be crucial for peace in the 21st century --- not only for Turkey or the region, but for Europe as well. 'Europe is the winner today,' Fischer said. Mehmet Dulger, head of the Turkish Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, acknowledged that this will be a 'very long process.' 'We want to turn confrontation into collaboration. Turkey will not destroy the architecture of the EU. Quite the contrary. We want to contribute by bringing our dynamism to the EU,' Dulger stressed. Onur Oymen, deputy chairman of the main opposition CHP slammed the AK Party government for not informing the nation and opposition about the deal before accepting it. 'We fear that the agreed text will be even tougher on Turkey than the outcome of the EU Council meetings last December, which mentioned an open-ended negotiation process and permanent restrictions on the free movement of Turkish labor. We also fear that the text may lead Turkey to an outcome other than full EU membership,' Oymen said.

US Intervenes in on Time to Rescue Turkey at EU: Turkish papers and television stations praised the United States for 'stepping in' at just the right time to help save Turkey's bid to join the European bloc. On Monday, Secretary Rice called PM Erdogan and convinced him that the set of rules for joining the EU could not oblige Turkey to drop objections to Cyprus' membership in NATO, papers report. Papers quote State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack as telling reporters that 'EU processes shouldn't affect or be brought into NATO processes.' 'I will reiterate that we believe a Turkey firmly anchored in Europe will be an even more reliable partner for the transatlantic family and a positive force for advancing peace, prosperity and democracy. The US has long supported Turkey's European aspirations, but we don't have a vote in this process. We have lent our diplomatic and rhetorical support to their aspirations, but ultimately this is a matter for the EU to decide,' McCormack said. McCormack noted that Rice also had a discussion with Foreign Minister Gul over the weekend, before speaking with PM Erdogan yesterday. According to another State Department official, Washington wanted to send a signal that NATO is independent from the EU. 'What we are saying to Turkey is not to worry that the deal it cut with the EU ties its hands at NATO. Because we don't think it does,' said the unidentified official. Many papers hailed the US intervention as key to solving yesterday's impasse in Luxembourg: "Aksam" claimed that "Condi's Call Saved the Day," while "Vatan" said "Condi Calls at the Most Critical Time."

PUK Congratulates Ankara on Accession Talks with EU: The Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) said on Monday that it supported the opening of accession talks between Turkey and the EU, the semi-official Anatolian News Agency (AA) reported. 'We consider Turkey's accession talks with the EU very important and useful not only for Turkey, but for the democratization and economic development of all Middle Eastern countries,' PUK Ankara representative Behruz Galali told AA.

Turkey, Israel Can Cooperate in Advanced Technology: AA also reported that Mose Kamhi, an Israeli Foreign Ministry official for special projects, said on Monday that Turkey and Israel can cooperate in the manufacturing and marketing of advanced technology. In a statement to mark the tenth anniversary of the free trade agreement between Turkey and Israel, Kamhi said that bilateral trade between Turkey and Israel increased to 2 billion USD last year from 45.7 million in 1980, but that it was far from reflecting the true potential of the two countries. Kamhi noted that authorized institutions in both countries can form joint and autonomous funds for business, as Israel has done with the United States and the UK. Kamhi recalled that the framework document signed between Ankara and Tel Aviv during PM Erdogan's visit to Israel in March called on the Turkish and Israeli businessmen to make 'joint entry' into new markets.

Ankara Condemns Bali Bombings: Ankara strongly condemned terrorist bomb attacks which killed 32 and injured 101 in Bali, Indonesia on Sunday. The Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) said in a statement yesterday that the bombings were 'crimes against humanity,' and stressed the need to carry out an effective international fight against terrorism.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

"We Cannot Digest Either"
Sami Kohen opined in the mainstream daily "Milliyet" (10/4):
"We are over the most tense 36 hours. Of course, both Turkey and Europe have gone through two very exciting days. From the US to the Arab world, the officials of many other

countries followed these developments with great curiosity. Everyone was shocked that the position of Austria, a rather small country, shook the EU so profoundly. Although the ostensible issue in Luxembourg was Turkey's membership, the real debate concerned the obvious weakness in the structure of the EU. After Austria adopted its anti-Turkish position, some commentators described Austria as 'the sick man of Europe,' a label previously reserved for the Ottoman Empire. It is clear that if the EU doesn't put itself in order soon, a crisis will become inevitable. Developments over the last 36 hours have had a negative effect on Turkey's desire for EU membership. Now it is up to the EU to take some measures that will improve Turkey-EU relations. The word 'digestion,' which the Austrians were so insistent on inculcating in the text of the framework document, has been repeated too often in recent days. It is a remote possibility that the EU will have problems in 'digesting' Turkey after a minimum 10-year negotiation process. But for Turkey, 'digesting' this word as a condition for EU membership was not easy at all."

"Now, the Negotiation Process Becomes Important"
Selcuk Gultasli commented in the Islamist-intellectual "Zaman" from Luxembourg (10/4): "Once again, the EU has made a decision on Turkey in a crisis atmosphere and at a late hour. Once again, the US had to intervene to convince the EU. Ut in the end, the EU agreed to keep the commitment that it gave on December 17. We cannot ignore Austria's success on the Croatia issue and its insistence on a 'privileged partnership.' Although the EU did not go along with 'privileged partnership' language for Turkey as Austria had insisted, few changes were made in the framework document. Austria was also successful in securing the start of the negotiations with Croatia. Since it was not possible that Austria could resist the other 24 members of the EU on its own, it is correct to say that some other EU members were giving implicit support to the Austrian position. First among these countries is France. After long hours of discussion, if the 'privileged partnership' language had been included in the final document, the EU would be have been viewed as an institution not to be trusted. But despite the crisis, the negotiations with the EU have been launched. Now the important thing is how the talks will continue to play out. Turkey, Europe and the rest of the world will benefit from a successful outcome."

"The Journey Begins."
Ismet Berkan wrote in the liberal-intellectual "Radikal" (10/4): "Let us all forget the last 36 hours of arguments and crisis. Let us even forget the struggle that has lasted so many years. These things are no longer important. Now Turkey is sitting at the negotiation table for full membership in the European Union. All of that struggle was waged with a single goal -- to enter the door of Europe. Now we have entered. But believe me, the rest of the trip will be even more difficult. We will face many more crises. Each new crisis will be a test of endurance for Turkey. Turkey now begins its long and critical journey."

MCELDOWNEY